



Pastor Hanke's Blog

February 16, 2020

Shame vs. Conviction

Bible Reference: Matthew 5:21-37

This year, for some reason, Jesus has put book after book about shame in my life. Ok, well just two books, but they have made me process a lot about shame. Shame is something we all face. Don't deny it—we all feel shame. It is also something we all use to make others feel bad.

I can't recall Jesus ever saying "Shame on you," but I certainly remember my grandma saying it. That is not a knock to my grandma because, as I said, we are all subject to it. The first time we see shame in the Bible is in the Garden of Eden. It has nothing to do with God shaming Adam and Eve, but rather they feel it all on their own as a response to what they know they shouldn't have done. This can make us think shame is a part of sinning, but really it is the reaction to our sin that the devil wants us to feel. He wants us to feel like we are *horrible people who don't matter*. That last part is key—shame moves us to a place where we think we don't matter and we want to run away.

Our preschool tries to counteract this as they deal daily with the children and their actions. The teachers tell the kids "You are not a bad girl, you made a bad choice." "I don't think you are a bad boy, I just don't like your bad choice." This moves the children away from self-judgment and focuses on the choice, or in real terms, the sin.

People dealing with shame can feel unwanted and unloved. God, who is love, never wants us to feel unloved. Yet, He does want to convict us of our sin. As we know, sin is dangerous, which makes the sin we are unaware of even more dangerous. With shame being something we are all familiar with, it is natural to read words meant to convict and feel shame instead. Our Gospel reading this week does that for many of us. Did Jesus really mean to shame us? The answer is no. Jesus wanted to convict us of the sins of which we are unaware, not shame us.

The readings this Sunday are challenging words from Jesus that many know well. These challenging words, if read improperly, can lead us to a state of shame rather than conviction. Conviction leads us to see our sin, repent, and hear the beautiful Gospel. This weekend we will move from hearing words that bring shame to words that bring conviction. May Jesus' words convict our hearts and prepare us to hear GRACE!

God's Peace,

Pastor Will